The Ambassador sat down heavily in a chair as if his legs could no longer support him.

Enrico put his engine down on the floor. He began to push it under the chairs as if they were railway tunnels.

For a moment no one spoke.

At last the Ambassador said: "Your Grace told me the dates when you were in Milan. I was there just a fortnight before you." The two men looked at each other and there was no need to say any more. Luella realised that the Ambassador must have been attracted to Tia in the same way that the Duke had been.

"There is certainly a distinct resemblance," the Duke said slowly.

"The way our eyebrows are shaped is something that runs in the family," the Ambassador said, "and many of my relations, as well as myself, have what you call a 'widow's peak' in the centre of the forehead."

"Both those features are very obvious in Enrico," the Duke remarked.

"As they have never been known in any other family, except ours," the Ambassador finished.

"Then . . what are you . . going to . . do . . about it?" Luella asked in a frightened voice.

The Ambassador turned to smile at her before he said: "Miss Hanley, you have brought me the son I have always longed for, but thought was impossible for me to have."

Before Luella or the Duke could speak he went on: "My first wife who died ten years ago left me with

two daughters. It will be five years next month since I married again and, to be frank, hoped to have a son. Then, unfortunately, my wife was involved in a carriage accident and though she has completely recovered from it, the doctors have said it is impossible for her to bear a child." There was a note in His Excellency's voice which told Luella what a blow that had been to him.

He then continued: "We have been talking of adopting a boy since, as you doubtless know, Italian women never feel complete without a family around them."

"Y.you do not . . think," Luella said hesitatingly, "that your wife will . . resent Enrico . . actually being . . your own . . s.son?"

"It happened before I had even met my wife," the Ambassador replied. "I was a lonely widower and I know she will understand."

"Oh . . I am glad . . so very glad!" Luella exclaimed. "Enrico is such a . . dear little boy . . and has beautiful manners . . which makes it obvious he has been very well brought up."

The Ambassador glanced at the Duke and said: "That is what we might have expected of Tia, who herself was the illegitimate daughter of an aristocrat. At the same time, this child must have nothing whatsoever to do with Vecchio!'

"That is . . exactly what we have been . . thinking," Luella said. "How could we send him . . back to that . . wicked man or to the sordid house in which he was living."

The Ambassador looked surprised. "Tia had a